

**ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION**

A method and corresponding network element configuration for delivering communications services between first and second survivable rings, each comprising a respective plurality of network elements, at least two of which are common to both rings. For each particular service, one of the common network elements is designated as a primary gateway node and another as a secondary gateway node. A primary inter-ring connection is established for the particular service by a switch at the primary gateway node, but no inter-ring connection is established at the secondary gateway node. The secondary gateway node comprises a controller for monitoring the status of the primary gateway node and establishing a new inter-ring connection for delivery of said service upon detecting a failure of the primary gateway node. This provides survivable inter-ring traffic which is bandwidth-efficient and with a low switching delay.